SOCIAL MOBILITY AMONG FISHING COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY IN KASARAGOD DISTRICT OF KERALA STATE

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Introduction

The individual in any society may be placed on a hierarchy of value expressing the prestige or respect with which each person is held. Those sharing more or less comparable standing will then form a prestige group or stratum. In some societies these arrangements are formal and explicit. They may be religiously sanctioned, as in the caste system in India, or even enforced by law. Similarly, individuals may be placed on large scale of possessions, separately for political power, land and money, those having similar shares of power or wealth can be grouped and considered as forming a stratum, or class, in the hierarchy or possession (Wankhede. G. G: 1999).

A number of studies have analyzed social mobility through both single and multiple approaches. The single approach emphasizes the criterion of occupation for determining social status, where as the multiple approach includes more than one criterion for determining social status. In the Indian context, the studies on social mobility with occupational index and status are a recent phenomenon. These studies developed a trend of studying mobility relating to caste, class, community, stratification, rural-urban background and social background factors.

The term vertical social mobility refers to the process by which individuals move from one position to another in society-position which by general consent have been given specific hierarchical values. When we study social mobility, we analyse the movement of individuals from one position to another in the existing social system. According to the direction of movement there are two types of vertical social mobility; upwards and downwards. Upward mobility refers to the

attainment of higher position and downward mobility indicates the loss of one's own status in the social system.

Social mobility is a much wider term and includes within it the upward or downward changes in the economic, political or occupational status of either the individual or the whole group. Modern industrial society offers greater opportunities for economic and political fluctuations through free competition and specialisation of education.

The social mobility refers to the variation in the social origin of the members of a given social stratum. It also refers to the ways in which the opportunities available to a given generation of men are distributed among them, according to their various characteristics. There is a distinction between social and occupational mobility. Occupational mobility is only a part of social mobility, (Sivarm. P. 1990.2).

Consequent to the urbanisation and industrialisation, conditions of city life have broken down many of the occupational taboos imposed by caste. Traditional caste denoted not only a rank but also a function, each caste group having a definite occupation as determined by the hereditary qualities.

Thus, social mobility can be defined as "the movement of individual, families and groups from one social position to another" (Goldhamer, Herbet. 2005**).** Sorokin**, (**1959.133) defines mobility as, "any transition of an individual or social object or value, anything that has been created or modified by human activity, from one social position to another".

According to Bendix and Lipset(1959.1- 2), the term social mobility refers to "the process by which individuals move from one position to another in society positions which general consent have been given specific hierarchical values.

When we study social mobility, we analyse the movement of individuals from positions possessing a certain rank to positions either higher or lower in the social system". Lipset. S.M and R.Bendix(1967,1-8) give two reasons for existing social mobility in every society, firstly, changes in demand for performance and secondly, changes in supply of talent.

According to Bernard, Barber**(**1957) mobility refers to " movement, either upward or downward, between higher and lower social classes; or more precisely, movement between one relatively full time, functionally significant social role and another that is evaluated as either higher or lower". This movement is to be conceived as a process occurring over time, with individuals (and their family units) moving from one role and social class position to another, because of what they have done or what has happened to them in various kinds of social interaction, such as in their family or in their work organisation, or during war or socio-economic expansion in their society.

The study of social mobility can be differentiated into two distinct traditions: a sociological tradition and an economic tradition. The sociological tradition is based on an understanding of the structure of society defined by an occupational hierarchy, while the economic tradition tends to focus on income groups. Both of these approaches have significant merits for the study of social mobility.

Fishing Community:

Fishing is one of the oldest means of subsistence of mankind. Many nations now compete to exploit the virgin areas of the oceans with modern fishing fleets. But, in spite of modern technology and increasing innovations in the fishing industry, it remains, by and large, in its traditional form even today (Pramanik, S.K. 1993.1).

In India, the term community has been widely used with reference to villages, tribes, peasants, religion, etc. The usage of the term community in India, Desai (1969.610) says: "The word community has, for the past many decades, denoted religious or caste groups or in some instances, economic groups not necessarily living in one locality; but with the inauguration of the community Development Programme in this country, it is intended to apply the concept of the village community as whole, cutting across caste, religious and economic differences".

Fishermen constitute a community only by virtue of their common occupation and all that the common occupation entails. It is, in other words, an occupational community. All the studies of fishermen that have been conducted so far, either in India or abroad, have treated fishermen as a community (Pramanik, S.K. 1993:5).

National Marine Fisheries Service has stated that "a fishing community is a social or economic group whose members reside at a specific location". A "community of interest" is made up of people who share similar interest e.g. people who are concerned about making the fishing industry safer.

Mathur (1978) gives a detailed analysis of sea fishing activity of the Mappila fisher folk of Kerala and their profound knowledge of the marine environment and cosmology. He also describes how the economy of the fishermen is interwoven with the socio-cultural milieu. Mathur's study seeks to test a set of specific hypotheses correlating fishing as an occupation and development of a fishing caste even among 'casteless' Muslims, fishing as a hazardous endeavor and development of rituals and beliefs to cover the risk of uncertainty and the like.

Review of literature:

In India sociologists in the past examined the occupational and social mobility and their findings are of great importance to social scientists.

The traditional occupational structure is gradually becoming more and more flexible. Certain number of new occupations has come into existence and from different castes people are able to move into them, indicating that the relationship between caste and occupation is slowly degenerating.

Lakshmanna, C. (1971) in his study of coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh, found that the respondents' occupational deviation from the grandfathers' occupation was slightly more marked than from their fathers' occupation. His data shows that 246 respondents (25 per cent), out of 986 were not following the occupation of their grandfathers. Only 21.3 percent among the respondents uniformly spread over all caste groups did not follow the occupations of their fathers.

Pramanik (1993) in his study 'the community life of fishermen in Hara and Sultanpur villages in Best Bengal' tried to explore the life of two communities and compared them. The author gathered data by using sample survey and observation method. In this study the researcher gives different facets of the life and culture of fishing community of Best Bengal, especially the life style of the fishermen, the attitude, the rituals, beliefs, ceremonies, recreation and economic activities. It is clear from the study that there is a movement from their traditional caste occupation to white-collar job and adopted urban life. The study also shows that due to the influence of urbanization there is a breakdown of traditional family system in to nuclear system. At the same time, there is not much improvement in

the status of women in the community and they have never enjoyed the economic freedom.

Importance of the study:

There are number of studies conducted in India and abroad about the fishing community. Most of the researches are community studies, covering various facets of community life, though the same facet of community life has not attracted the attention of all the researchers to the same degree. Some have given greater attention to the economics of fishing, while others have concentrated on the technology of fishing. Still others have made the rituals and beliefs of fishermen their main concern. In almost all of these studies, the method of observation depended up on, either singly or in conjunction with some other methods.

There are number of studies conducted on social mobility among various backward communities and also among fishing communities in India. They have investigated only a few aspects of such fishing communities. None of the studies focused to provide a comprehensive aspect of the degree of social mobility which is taking place among the fishing community in North Malabar region of coastal district of Kasaragod in Kerala. In order to understand the trends of social mobility among fishing community a case study is absolutely needed and it attains importance.

Objectives of the study:

The study has been carried out to investigate the trends of social mobility that are taking place among fishing community in Kasaragod, a coastal district of Kerala state and specifically the present study has been undertaken for the following purposes. They are:

1. To understand about the fishing community in Kasaragod coastal district.
2. To study the demographic profile of fishing community in the study area.
3. To know the socio-economic and cultural aspects of fishing community.
4. To study the trends of social mobility among traditional fishing community.
5. To understand the problems related to fishing occupation faced by fishing community.
6.

Location of the study:

The present study is concerned about the traditional marine fishing community of Malabar Coast of Kerala state. It covers the coastal areas of Kasaragod District. Kasaragod is the northern most district of Kerala state.

Coverage of the study:

The present study covers 16 fishing villages in Kasaragod District of Malabar coast. There are 6864 fishermen families living in these coastal villages' out of 10528 fishing people, 7514 are men and 3014 are women who are engaged in marine fishing (Department of Fisheries, Kerala Fishermen Welfare Board).

Research methodology:

Universe of the study:

Kerala with a total terrestrial area of 38000 square kilometers has a coastal line of 590 kilometers. Kerala holds the major share of exports in this sector from India. More than a million people belonging to the fishing communities live in 222 fishing villages in the State. About 2 Lakh people depend on supplementary

professions like processing and marketing of fish for their survival. (Draft fisheries Policy of Kerala).

According to the 2001 census the estimated population of the Kerala state is 3, 18, 39,000 and Marine Fishermen Population (estimated) is 846088. The total fishing families in coastal area of Kasaragod is 6864. However, due to lack of sufficient time and material it is not possible to cover all the fishing families for interview; so that the researcher has decided to take samples from the universe. It reveals that the selection of the fishing villages in the district is required for selecting respondents to be interviewed to collect information.

Selection of Respondents:

The coastal area of Kerala state has spread in different districts. The present study is limited to Kasaragod district of North Malabar. The fishermen families scattered in different fishing villages are selected as respondents for interviewing. A sampling frame has been prepared consisting of fishermen family from all the villages of Kasaragod district.

Respondents are sampled out with the help of proportionate stratified sampling. This sampling involves drawing a sampling from each village in proportion to the fishermen's share in the total population.

The proportionate sampling gives proper representation to each stratum (coastal village) whose statistical efficiency is generally high. This method gives a self-weighing sample the population mean can be estimated simply by calculation of sample mean.

Sampling:

The sampling frame has been prepared using proportionate stratified sampling method. The researcher was drawn 300 (4.37pecent of total)sample households for this study. The selected strata sample sizes are:

SL. No	Name of the fishing villages	No. of Fishermen family	Proportion	Sample size
1	Thrikaripur	209	3.04	9
2	Valiyaparambu	280	4.04	12
3	Padannakadapuram	462	6.75	20
4	Kadangod	405	5.90	17
5	Thaikadapuram	585	8.52	26
6	Poonjavi	291	4.23	13
7	Hosedurge	202	2.94	7
8	Ajanur	408	5.94	17
9	Pallikkare	321	4.76	14
10	Kottikulam	403	5.87	17
11	Kishzhur	480	6.99	20
12	Kasaba	1220	17.77	53
13	Kavugoli	292	4.25	14
14	Koipadi	564	8.21	25
15	Shiriya	252	3.61	14
16	Bengaramanjeswara	490	7.13	22
Total		6864	4.37	300

Tools of data collection:

The search for answer to research questions is done through data collection. The primary and secondary source of data is collected. The primary source of data is collected through interviewing, personal discussion and observation. Under the method of interviewing, interview schedule has been used as a tool of data collection.

The interview schedule has been prepared by keeping in mind the main objectives of the research. The topic included in the schedule are family background, education, occupation, preference of the occupation, method of crafts used, problems of fishing occupation, socio-economic and cultural aspect, housing, health, marriage and migration.

Three hundred samples of household are interviewed with the help of interview schedule. The investigator has familiarized with the village residents and sought help from one member to build rapport with the respondents to explore information from them. The data gathered through interview at the respective residence of the respondents.

Apart from using interview schedule, visits were conducted to interview some respondents to assess and to know in detail the extent of the mobility among the members of the community. The discussions with the community leaders were also held to collect key information about the community.

The secondary sources of data collection has been done through census reports, statistical abstracts of the state government departments, annual reports, published articles, magazines and through national and international publications.

Pilot study:

After finalizing the interview schedule a pilot study was carried out to know the consistency and correctness of the data in few coastal villages of study area. After this, changes were made in the outline of the schedule and verification was made for the final interview.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data:

The completed interview schedules are coded; master sheet and table are prepared. Interpretations and findings are drawn on the basis of information collected and logical conclusions drawn.

Limitation of the study:

1. The investigator realized the problem of reliable data which is needed to be gathered as many respondents are unenthusiastic to give information about their families over generation.
2. Secondly, it is felt that they are not disclosing some factors like possession and the exact income which they receive.
3. Another short coming which is faced by the researcher is that the respondents are not disclosing certain matters which they think are of no benefit to them.

Body of the thesis:

The first chapter deals with meaning, concept, definition of social mobility. types of social mobility, theories of social mobility, fishing community, reviews of literature, objectives of the study, location of the study, coverage of the study, hypothesis of the study, universe of the study, selection of respondents, tools of data collection, limitations of the study and the body of the thesis.

The second chapter includes demographic profile such as district profile, physical aspects such as climate, temperature, rainfall, hill ranges, flora and fauna, sea, rivers, crops, industries, educational institutions, transport, ecology and mineral resources and population. It also cover age, marital status, educational level, domicile period, living region, distance from home to town, preference of occupation, traditional and non-traditional occupation, family structure, size of the family and educational status of household of the respondents

The third chapter consists of socio- economic, cultural aspects of fishing community. It includes fisher population in India, their education, occupation, religion, fisheries' co-operatives, crafts, and other salient features. It also highlights fishing community in Kerala, fishing community in Kasaragod, oral tradition of the origin of community, the root of Mukkuva (fisher folks) community. The socio economic aspects includes such as family background, occupation of the family members, income of the family, family expenditure, indebtedness of the family, savings, types of housing, education, dropouts, health condition, religious life, taboos, marriage, festivals and fairs, and their participation.

The fourth chapter covers social mobility among fishing community, measurement of social mobility, inter-generational social mobility, methods and crafts used for fishing, types of housing, material possession, types of dwelling, intra-generational mobility, education, preference of education by children, personal interest in the educational progress of children, occupational mobility, Preference of occupation, attitudes towards traditional occupation, women's participation in the traditional occupation, people's perception of the community, reservation policy, migration, political participation.

The fifth chapter comprises of problems of fishing occupation like marketing related, lack of availability of operational requirements such as kerosene, oil and other, problems related mechanized trawling, less catch due to reduction in fish resources, occupational risk and lack of safety guards during fishing operation, etc.

And the sixth chapter deals with summary of findings and conclusions.

Conclusion:

The fishing community under study are given due importance and have shown a positive attitude towards education. They agreed that education is social instrument towards achieving social mobility and it is only through education that can bring about change among fishing community. The rate of literacy among the succeeding generation is increasing. Moreover, the respondents are having a high expectation from their children by providing education. It shows an upward educational mobility. Educated parents are motivating their children and they are giving personal interest to their children's studies. The occupational mobility is seen among the fishing community. 24 percent of respondents have deviated from traditional to non-traditional occupation. Further, there is clear upward inter-generational mobility among fishing community. The old hut, kacha and Puckka houses were replaced by tiled and RCC houses and use of modern gadgets for fishing occupation have also increased over the generation.

There are deviations from the traditional occupations as it seems to be due to many reasons. The dropping of traditional occupation is the indication of upward mobility. The deviations from traditional occupation to a new or present occupation are not judged by the community as higher/equal or lower to their traditional occupation. The people who have accepted present or new occupations

accepted the by the people are not away from the community functions as well as celebrations and feel that they are united for the welfare of their own people.

There is an inclination of workers to change their work in all fishing villages. Mobility changes the structure of the social strata in the area due to the shift from traditional occupation. Change in traditional occupation and structure leads to mobility among the fishing community.

Social mobility leads to social and economic changes in the villages. It is a trend of readjustment of the population to change in the occupation, which strengthens and promotes many aspects of economic and social change. It plays a basic catalytic role in the structural change in the traditional primary sector. Structural change in the traditional primary sector is closely associated with development. Mobility takes place in numerous forms based on place and work-related characteristics. There are traditional occupational changes with no change in residence. There is Mobility in which neither the people's occupation or residence changes but their job changes. Occupation changes with no change in region. It is identified that there are changes in occupations which are not accompanied by the changes in residence. Most of these types of mobility involve a shift into available occupation nearby the area in other sectors. There is a movement of people from one job once to the same (other sector) or similar job in another.ie geographic change with no change of employment (other sectors). Some people change their geographical position or location with a change in occupation in other sector. These include geographic and occupational mobility. These job-related moves are accompanied by changes in occupational pattern.

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